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ABSTRACT

The EUDISED (European Documentation and Information System for Education) database is described in this document and proposals are made for extending the database to cover areas in addition to educational research projects. Mention is made of educational periodicals, audiovisual teaching aids, educational software, the periodical "News-letter/Faits Nouveaux," the EUDISED multilingual thesaurus, and the publications of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. At the June 1985 meeting of the council, it was decided efforts should concentrate on incorporating into the database the EUDISED thesaurus in all of its nine language versions, the periodical "News-letter/Faits Nouveaux," and abstracts describing its own publications in the field of education. (Author/THC)

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

THE EUDISED DATABASE

Present situation and possible developments

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Abstract

The present state of the EUDISED database is described. Proposals are made for extending the base to cover areas other than that of educational research projects. In particular, mention is made of educational periodicals, audiovisual teaching aids, educational software, the periodical News-letter/Faits Nouveaux, the EUDISED multilingual thesaurus and the publications of the Council for Cultural Co-operation.

The Council for Cultural Co-operation at its June 1985 meeting decided that efforts should concentrate on incorporating into the database the EUDISED thesaurus in all if its nine language versions, the contents of the periodical News-letter/Faits Nouveaux and abstracts describing its own publications in the field of education.

EUDISED descriptors: Council of Europe; data bank; data processing; EUDISED; information dissemination

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1. Present situation

The EUDISED database comprised information in abstract form concerning ongoing and recently completed educational research and development (R & D) projects. Data collection began in the mid 1970s and the base contains some 6,000 entries (April 1985). The table below gives the approximate percentage of contributions by country:

Austria	13%
Belgium	2%
Cyprus	less than 1%
Denmark	less than 1%
Finland	4%
France	18%
Germany FR	12%
Greece	less than 1%
Ireland	2%
Italy	3%
Luxembourg	less than 1%
Netherlands	10%
Norway	3%
Portugal	less than 1%
Spain	3%
Sweden	5%
Switzerland	10%
United Kingdom	13%
Yugoslavia	2%

The information in the database is available in two forms:

i. EUDISED R & D Bulletin (ISSN 0378-7192): The Bulletin is distributed on a paying subscription basis (US $55 for four issues plus the cumulated index). On 31 January 1985 there were 434 paid-up subscribers for issues 21-24 and 34 countries. A further 50 copies are distributed free of charge to EUDISED national agencies. The Cultural Fund receives no royalty from the sale of the Bulletin.

ii. Online access provided by the Information Retrieval Service of the European Space Agency (ESA/IRS). The Cultural Fund receives 72FF for each hour of online searching and 0.50FF for each offline print. In 1984 there were 51,946 contact hours and 1,641 offprints. Online searching of the base was carried out in 21 countries, six of which were non-European.

2. Development of the EUDISED database

2.1 Articles from educational periodicals (EP)

Two experimental EUDISED EP Bulletins have been published, in 1976 and 1982. The first publication showed, and the second confirmed, that it was technically possible to include in the EUDISED database abstracts summarising articles published in educational periodicals. A large majority of members of the EUDISED data network group have on several occasions affirmed their wish to see the EUDISED database extended to cover educational periodicals. Little progress has however been made towards realising this wish, mainly on account of a lack of resources in EUDISED national agencies to assume the

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additional work that would be involved. Increased possibilities of tape-to-tape transfer of EP data might help to overcome this difficulty. Participation in an EP activity is left to the discretion of individual countries (see Report on 47th CDCC Session, CDCC (85) 16, item 7, Point I.3.3).

2.2 Audiovisual teaching materials (AV)

An experimental EUDISED AV Bulletin, published in 1976, showed that it was possible to collect information concerning audiovisual teaching materials, and that such data collection was potentially cost-efficient. The incorporation of this information into the existing EUDISED database would present difficulties, in particular on account of the fact that the EUDISED thesaurus would not be an adequate tool for indexing. Since 1976 there has been a surge in the development of educational software. Any future action in the field of audio-visual materials would have to include the collection of information concerning educational software.

2.3 The EUDISED thesaurus

Online access to the EUDISED thesaurus would facilitate searching of of the present online EUDISED database. ESA/IRS has a machine-readable copy of the 1984 edition of the EUDISED thesaurus and has been asked to investigate the possibility of making it available online. One of the technical problems facing ESA/IRS is the extensive character set used in the production of the EUDISED R & D Bulletin. For example, as from issue 25, the Bulletin will contain a subject matter index in Greek. Online access to the EUDISED multi-lingual thesaurus could lead to the development of an educational terminology database.

2.4 News-letter/Faits Nouveaux

News-letter/Faits Nouveaux has been published by the Documentation Centre for Education in Europe since the beginning of the 1970s. Its information relating to educational policies and developments in member states of the Council for Cultural Co-operation would be a most useful addition to the present online R & D information. News-letter/Faits Nouveaux is not an abstract journal. Computerisation of its contents would require a full-text approach. A machine-readable version of one issue of News-letter/Faits Nouveaux is in the possession of ESA/IRS for evaluation. ESA/IRS had indicated that it hopes to be able to offer its online users a full-text service.

2.5 Council of Europe publications and documents

There exists no readily usable catalogue of Council of Europe publications and documents concerning educational matters. Much of the work of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) is lost, for example, as human memory fades or when an employee changes job. There is no technical difficulty preventing the computerisation of such documentation and its addition to an online database. The Council for Cultural Co-operation has already given approval to the computerisation of its documents.

2.6 Geographic coverage

The number of countries contributing information to the EUDISED database has grown to 19. The CDCC member states not yet contributing are: Holy See, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Turkey. One could envisage limiting the

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EUDISED database to information concerning educational research projects, but to enlarge the number of countries contributing such information. One non-CDCC state already contributes, namely Yugoslavia. The CDCC might wish overtures to be made to other European countries, or even non-European countries, if the database is seen as a source of information relevant to European education, rather than as a source of European produced information.

3. Priorities and problems

The following comments are offered as guidance for the Council for Cultural Co-operation.

For an extension of the EUDISED database to be worthwhile, it is desirable that there should be a massive input of new information. One should think perhaps in terms of an initial batch of 2,000 items.

Incorporation of information relating to educational periodicals has long been advocated by the EUDISED data network group as a desirable development. Unfortunately, little concrete progress has been made. An extension of the database to include educational periodicals is likely to depend on an existing machine-readable database in this area coming within EUDISED orbit. Discussions with such database producers have not yet resulted in firm proposals.

The problem of how to assemble a critical mass of data also affects a development to cover the field of audiovisual materials and educational software.

It would therefore seem more efficient to concentrate immediate efforts to extend the EUDISED database on those areas where a sufficient quantity of information is readily accessible. It is proposed that efforts should now be made to incorporate into the EUDISED database:

- the EUDISED thesaurus in all its language versions;
- the contents of the periodical News-letter/Faits Nouveaux and
- abstracts describing the Council of Europe's publications and documents concerning education.

4. Policy decisions

4.1 With regard to the EUDISED thesaurus and to News-letter/Faits Nouveaux:

It will be necessary for the Council for Cultural Co-operation to support the Secretariat in persuading ESA/IRS of the desirability of using the contents of the periodical to extend the coverage of the database, and of the practical advantages of having the EUDISED thesaurus online.

4.2 With regard to the Council of Europe's publications:

4.2.1 In which language(s) should the abstracts be written? Indexing done in one language is automatically extended to the other eight thesaurus languages by existing software. If it is decided to have abstracts in English and French, it will obviously be more expensive than having abstracts in one language.

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The language question is a thorny one. In the EUDISED R & D Bulletin abstracts are in either English, French or German. Initially, the abstracts were in English or French. Editing difficulties made it necessary to accept contributions written in German. Most online databases are monolingual, that is in English. A monolingual policy with regard to the Council of Europe's publications will be less costly than a bilingual policy, not only on account of computerisation costs but also on account of the time taken in preparing abstracts.

4.2.2 Although it is not necessary to have a printed version of an online database, it is usual to have one. Since the EUDISED R & D Bulletin is available on a subscription basis, it would be logical to require payment for a Bulletin containing information about CDCC publications. Ideally, such a product should be commercialised by the Council of Europe itself, rather than having to have recourse to outside companies.

4.2.3 The most logical policy as regards choice of documentation for incorporation in the database would be both forward and backward looking. That is, new publications would be entered on production and publications produced in past years would be added gradually until such time as all major ones have been entered into the base.

Once it becomes possible to have online access to information concerning Council of Europe publications, it will become necessary for the Secretariat to establish a service which will make available the full text in printed and/or microfiche form of documents requested. The charges made by ERIC, the biggest American educational online database, are as follows:

microfiche	(up to 480 pages)	$0.97
paper copy	1-25 pages	$2.15
	26-50 pages	$3.90
	51-75 pages	$5.65

4.2.4 The Council for Cultural Co-operation has little choice but to create an online computerised index of its publications. If it does not, its publications will be known to fewer and fewer people. Computerisation will permit a more efficient utilisation of existing publications; more efficient because the machine remembers all that it is told to remember; more efficient because the machine can find very quickly the publications being sought; more efficient because the machine can sort publications using more complex criteria than those permitted by manual methods.

There are no major technical difficulties that would hinder an extension of the EUDISED database to include information concerning CDCC publications. It will, however, be necessary to reapportion resources within the Directorate, and perhaps the Secretariat. The computerisation of CDCC data would be facilitated if the Directorate was equipped with appropriate hardware.

The above text was discussed by the Council for Cultural Co-operation at its 48th session (Strasbourg, 17-20 June 1985). The relevant extract from the report on the session is given below.

The CDCC took note of document CDCC (85) 25 on the possible future development of the EUDISED online database, and agreed that efforts should be made to incorporate:

- the EUDISED thesaurus in all of its nine language versions;
- the contents of the periodical News-letter/Faits Nouveaux;
- abstracts describing the Council of Europe's publications and documents concerning education.

The financial implications would have to be considered in the light of the budget proposals for the years to come; an increase in funds for computerisation could be justified by the wider publicity for the CDCC's work which would result from the investment.

It was noted that cultural research projects could not be readily included in the database, since work on the Cultural Development Thesaurus (1976) had not been pursued. Only cultural research projects with a marked educational content could be incorporated into the database at present.

Contributions to the EUDISED database

In the near future, Austria would increase its input of abstracts of educational research and development (R&D) projects by between 40% - 50%.

Articles from educational periodicals (EP)

Austria, in particular, would like to see the EUDISED database extended to cover educational periodicals. It was not essential to have a printed version of such information; online access and microfiches might suffice. Particular efforts should be made to include EP data on higher and adult education. As a lack of resources in EUDISED national agencies made it impossible for them to assume additional work, transfer of already existing machine-readable EP data seemed to be the only way forward.

Audiovisual teaching materials (AV)

A lack of resources in EUDISED national agencies precluded the collecting of AV data and of information concerning educational software.

The EUDISED thesaurus

In addition to the "macro" thesaurus, the two subthesauri (modern language teaching and special education) should be made available on online. When concluding contracts concerning thesaurus management, preference should be given to institutions rather than to individuals. This was a better guarantee of continuity.

Agencies that contributed R&D data should, as far as possible, be able to obtain a copy of the thesaurus tape in order to facilitate the development of lists of national descriptors to be linked to the "macro" thesaurus.

Higher and adult education should be given better coverage in future development of the thesaurus.

Geographic coverage

There were no objections to including data from non-CDCC States (e.g. Yugoslavia) provided such data were relevant for Europe.

Languages to be used for abstracts in the database

The Federal Republic of Germany would like to see the present practice maintained, whereby abstracts may be written not only in English or French but also in German. There were no funds available nationally for translating German abstracts into other languages.

Online ordering of documents

Government agencies in CDCC countries should not be required to pay to obtain the full text of non-commercial CDCC publications and documents indexed in the EUDISED database.

Appropriate hardware

To facilitate the computerisation of CDCC data, the Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport should be provided the appropriate equipment.

Document prepared by W.F. Barrett

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